

From: josh
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

From the beginning of the era of the Personal Computer, Microsoft has led a virtual monopoly in the market of Operating Systems. They have used various nefarious business practices in order to maintain their foothold in the market. Microsoft has a tendency to embrace technologies, extend them, then subsequently extinguish the competition. When Microsoft first released Windows 95, it came packaged with a program for Microsoft's new online service, The Microsoft Network. The icon for this program was put on a prime location on the desktop. Popular online services such as AOL and Compuserve, which freely distribute their client software, were nowhere to be found on the desktop, but were buried on the CD.

Another clearer example is the integration of Microsoft's web browsing software Internet Explorer with the Windows 98 operating system. When your browser appears in over 90% of the installed base of computer systems around the world, there is little chance for any sort of competition. This is what competitor Netscape argued, and this is one of the issues that the Justice Department takes task with.

Personally, I don't think the DOJ settlement will hurt Microsoft much. Their foothold in the computer market is already too strong. This is in part because 'the damage already done', people are very used to using Microsoft branded software and will not want to take the time to learn something else. Computer makers will still bundle Microsoft Windows with their machines because it is what the customer demands. This case has effectively dealt a weak blow to Microsoft in image, but not in strength. The software juggernaut that is Microsoft will continue to dominate in the future because its roots are too deep. And if left unchecked, they will continue embracing, extending, and extinguishing.